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Representative Berta Gardner*House District 24*

FASCIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: DOT

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6329

FROM: IRIS MATTHEWS

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Aide to Rep. Gardner

DATE: December 19, 2005

#OF PAGES: 3

Attached please find Representative Gardner's comments on the Draft 2006-2008
Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you have any questions about
them.

Thank you,

Iris Matthews

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Representative Berta Gardner

House District 24

December 19, 2005

The Honorable Frank Murkowski
Governor of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Murkowski:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment on the Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan for 2006-2008. Some of the proposed projects will have a significant impact on my district and also the greater Anchorage area.

Let me also thank you for support last year of some very important transportation projects in my district including Bragaw/Tudor intersection improvements and the extension of Dowling Road east from Laurel Street to Abbott Loop.

Another long-standing need in my congested midtown district is for traffic and safety improvements in the Lake Otis and Tudor intersection. We are disappointed that despite numerous legislative promises of support the funding was ultimately cut from the budget.

This year, I am concerned that significant reduction in the Municipality of Anchorage's AMATS allocation will delay other important area transportation projects. Last year, the allocation was \$42 million dollars, and this year it has been reduced 60% to only \$17 million dollars. As I understand it, this reduction in funding was a result of specific earmarks for our federal transportation projects. Now that Congress has lifted those restrictions, and the FY 07 budget only uses a fraction of that transportation funding, I believe the AMATS allocation should be adjusted appropriately.

I also want to make a few comments on some of the key projects proposed for Midtown in this draft version of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan:

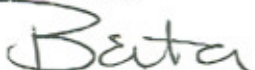
I am encouraged to see Seward Highway improvements as part of the State's plan. The areas of the Anchorage bowl that are the receiving the greatest amount of growth are the central and

southeast areas and the New Seward Highway in the main north-south corridor serving those areas. During peak traffic times, the pace of traffic on the highway is often slowed to a crawl. When improvements are being designed, I believe that adding High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes should be given full consideration. In addition, my constituents, many of whom live adjacent to the New Seward Highway, have been adamant that sound barriers to protect their quality of life be a part of any New Seward Highway improvements.

Adding an interchange at International Airport Road will allow freeway connection to and from the Anchorage International Airport. An earlier scoping study mentioned that this option may contribute to some much needed congestion relief on Tudor Road and C Street. However, more analysis is needed to determine if there will also be an impact in traffic north of 36th Street, particularly if this area is not to be included in the upgrades.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to comment on the 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and look forward to working with you on these and other important projects in the coming legislative session.

Sincerely,



Representative Berta Gardner